

# **American Academy of Pediatrics issues guidance for children's emotional needs during COVID-19**

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(HealthDay)—In guidance issued by the American Academy of Pediatrics, recommendations are presented to help pediatricians support the emotional and behavioral needs of children, teenagers, and families during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Noting that preexisting emotional and behavioral health challenges and disparities were acutely exacerbated by the pandemic, the authors address the importance of providing support for the emotional and behavioral health of infants, [children](#), adolescents, and families.

According to the guidance, children in different age groups and with distinct developmental needs have reacted differently to the pandemic, with one in four youths experiencing clinically elevated depression symptoms and one in five experiencing anxiety, globally. Pediatricians should continue to inquire about child, youth, and family functioning across multiple domains during the pandemic. As the pandemic has resulted in significant economic impacts, assessment for social determinants of health, including [food insecurity](#) and unstable housing, takes on added urgency; this is especially true for historically under-resourced populations. Pediatricians should recognize that emotional and behavioral symptoms in children may be related to COVID-19-related exposures and events, and they should use open-ended surveillance questions to identify COVID-19-related trauma. Every office visit should integrate behavioral and mental health surveillance and evidence-based screening. In addition, checking in with parents/caregivers regarding their own emotional reactions to the [pandemic](#) and the implication on the family is critical.

"We need to improve timely access to evidence-based [mental health treatment](#)," Lee Beers, M.D., president of the American Academy of Pediatrics, said in a statement. "This means integrating mental [health](#) supports within our primary care offices, school, and other settings."

**More information:** [More Information](#)

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